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MIDDLE EAST CHIEF VISITS CHURCHILL

General Robertson Discusses
Questions of Area as Prime
Minister Prepares to Leave

By CLIFTON DANIEL

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES

LONDON, Dec. 27—Busily engaged in preparations for his trip to Washington, Prime Minister Churchill talked for more than two hours today with Gen. Sir Brian Robertson, Commander in Chief of British forces in the Middle East.

An announcement from the Prime Minister's Office said that in view of his impending departure for the United States, General Robertson had come home "to discuss general questions connected with the command in the Middle East."

Presumably the general gave a full report on the situation in the Suez Canal zone, where British troops have been fighting off an Egyptian effort to drive them out of the country.

He may also have been consulted about the plans of Britain, the United States, France and Turkey to establish a joint military command in the Eastern Mediterranean and about the relationship of the new command to the existing North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Some political observers in London thought that General Robertson might be under consideration for appointment as political and military director of the British campaign against Communist-led guerrillas in Malaya.

Lyttelton Visits Churchill

While General Robertson was at 10 Downing Street, another caller was Colonial Secretary Oliver Lyttelton, who recently made a first-hand inspection of the situation in Malaya. Mr. Lyttelton and Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery met the Prime Minister Sunday at the latter's country residence.

A decision on the appointment of a new chief for the Malayan campaign and on the directive to be given to him probably will be made at an early meeting of the British Cabinet.

Mr. Churchill is expected to outline to the Cabinet the matters that he will discuss with President Truman and to get Cabinet endorsement for his plans.

The composition of the party that will accompany the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, which was made known today, suggested that there would be strong emphasis in the Washington talks on the military aspects of British-United States amity and on the reorganization and strengthening of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Two Chiefs of Staff to Go

In addition to the two Cabinet members primarily concerned with defense matters—General Lord Ismay and Lord Cherwell—Mr. Churchill will take with him two of the three chiefs of staff of the British armed services. The party will include the following:

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Rhoderick McGrigor, First Sea Lord; Field Marshal Sir William Slim, Chief of the Imperial General Staff; Lieut. Gen. Sir Kenneth McLean, Chief Staff Officer to the Ministry of Defense, and Evelyn Shuckburgh, Chief of the Western Organization Department of the Foreign Office, which deals with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Council of Europe.

Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden and their financial advisers and secretaries, will leave London Saturday evening and sail from Southampton Sunday on the Queen

THE NEW YORK TIMES
Friday, 28 December 1951

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Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden and their associates, including economic and financial advisers and secretaries, will leave London Saturday evening and sail from Southampton Sunday on the Queen Mary. They will arrive in New York next Thursday, 4 January,* and go directly to Washington.

The talks in the capital will last about ten days, after which Mr. Churchill will go to Ottawa at the invitation of the Canadian Government.

** Thursday is 3 January.*